

Santa Rosa County
Emergency Services Advisory Committee
July 19, 2006
2:00 p.m.
MINUTES

Members present:

James Chalmers
Stephen Cozart
Joe Diamond
Werner Panchenko
Don Vanderryt

Members absent:

Brad Baker

Staff present:

Deb Grinde

Invited Guests:

Donna Griffin, Chumuckla Water System, Inc.
Raymond McDaniel, Town of Jay Water System
Brian Watson, City of Milton

Agenda approved as submitted for this meeting with no exceptions.

Minutes for meeting held on May 24, 2006 approved as drafted and submitted.

Old Business

Fire Hydrants

This meeting has been dedicated to concerns of the water purveyors of the county:

It was determined at a previous meeting that included the water purveyors that a request for proposal (RFP) would be issued regarding the annual maintenance of the fire hydrants to include flushing, lubricating, flow testing, painting, clearing weeds and debris from the area. The request included three thousand seven hundred thirteen (3,713) hydrants. We received two (2) responses to our request. The first was from a company out of Irving, TX at a cost of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) each or a total of three hundred seventy-one thousand three hundred dollars (\$371,300.00). The second bid came from a local company (Pensacola) at a unit price of seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) each or a total of two hundred seventy-eight thousand four hundred seventy-five dollars (\$278,475.00) total for the annual maintenance.

S. Cozart noted at this point that the City of Milton takes care of those hydrants within the city limits and the Midway Fire District maintains those within their district and so should be excluded from the total number of hydrants requiring this service.

S. Cozart reviewed the number of hydrants within each district and stated that the costs would be distributed to each district proportionately so that the costs would be absorbed by the water purveyors for each area.

In addition there is a third party who has requested an opportunity to quote the maintenance work. This may be possible due to the fact that we know the volume of hydrants will be reduced considerably.

S. Cozart asked the water purveyors to share their thoughts about the issue at hand.

R. McDaniel, Town of Jay Water System, stated that because they only have a total of forty-three (43) hydrants the costs would not be as significant to them as they would to other districts. Mr. McDaniel sees this as more of a help to the fire departments than to the water purveyors. S. Cozart stated that it may be regarded as such but the state statute actually puts the burden with the water purveyors and not the fire departments. The purpose of pursuing this service was to assist the smaller systems with the work.

D. Griffin, Chumuckla Water System, questioned what tasks were included within the bid for the work. S. Cozart stated that it included all requirement established by the AWWA standards. He also advised her that this committee envisioned that the water districts would reimburse the county annually on a per hydrant basis. D. Griffin stated that they currently have the work contracted out and would not want to duplicate what they have already committed to for their hydrants. She does believe that the lower bid is a great price for the service provided. D. Griffin has an individual maintenance contractor who is paid on a monthly basis. Any flushing or flow testing is not being completed at this time and if any repair issues occur they are not included with the contract but are paid for separately.

W. Panchenko stated that the maintenance service set up by the provider would not include any costs to complete routine repairs. D. Griffin stated that she understands that the purveyor would be responsible for the costs to correct, replace or complete any repairs. S. Cozart noted that materials and labor for any repairs was not specifically addressed within the RFP. He stated that this committee will keep this under consideration as we move forward with this project.

Brian Watson, City of Milton Water System, stated that the City of Milton FD does maintain the hydrants within the city limits. They have many hydrants outside the city limits that are maintained by the Water Department. They are flushed and tested on a regular basis but he was unable to advise whether it occurred on an annual basis. He stated that the maintenance is not as big an issue as the repairs to the hydrants as it involves special training, certification, tools, etc. It is not inexpensive to complete this maintenance and so an omnibus contract might be the best solution. The city personnel complete the maintenance repairs on an as needed basis and not on a routine basis at this time. The cost quoted seems to be reasonable and the city does use a contractor to complete any repairs to the hydrants.

S. Cozart queried whether an omnibus contract that included any repair work would be of interest to the water purveyors.

J. Diamond suggested that the local provider from the Pensacola area may be hired to complete any of the work including repairs on a monthly basis as an alternate solution to the issue of repair work.

D. Vanderryt would like to know who would be responsible for the additional equipment costs, training for special certification, etc. S. Cozart stated that the supplemental expenditures would be specifically stated within the RFP including the fact that they would have to have the ability to complete repairs as required.

To S. Cozart's question the purveyors all agreed that the repairs are completed on a case by case basis as they can all be different.

R. McDaniel questioned whether it would be feasible for the county to hire two (2) people to be dedicated to doing only this work and to purchase their tools and equipment. The cost savings would be significant and we would be hiring local people who need jobs. A cost could be set to charge back the purveyors on an annual basis. W. Panchenko agreed and stated that the work could be completed within a shorter time frame if it controlled at the county level.

J. Diamond stated that this had been considered and the purpose of sending the RFP out was to get an idea of what the actual costs would be and to help determine whether it was a viable idea to go with hiring a county employee.

Discussion followed regarding the purchase of a truck, equipment, hiring of employees, etc. R. McDaniel stated that the fire departments would also be more prone to assisting the county employees. Determined that the following would be necessary to consider:

- 3 employees to include their salaries, benefits, etc.
- 1 truck
- 1 GPS system
- 1 lap top computer, phone and/or radio
- Tools, etc

Discussion ensued regarding different requisites such as qualifications or certifications, work responsibilities, the availability of heavy equipment such as a back hoe (county) when necessary.

W. Panchenko stated that there is a particular class that would have to be completed. R. McDaniel stated that the fire hydrant suppliers offer classes for certification and W. Panchenko stated that the fire extinguisher suppliers also offer training.

S. Cozart stated that further research would be necessary prior to this committee making a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Will need to list needs such as employees, training and certifications, equipment, truck, lifts, etc. Will also note that the heavy equipment that may be needed already exists whether it is in the Town of Jay or within the county itself.

Discussion led to the idea that the initial start up would actually be less than an annual contract and the pursuing years would be less the start up costs!

W. Panchenko stated that he would contact Jim Hall with the State Fire Marshall's office in order to find out what our requirements will be.

B. Baker will contact A. Whitfield and D. Cook regarding the costs for equipment and employee payroll and bring that information back to our next meeting.

S. Cozart noted that the shrinkage in the number of hydrants will most likely have an effect on the cost to provide the service. That is the fewer number of hydrants is most likely to cost more in the long run. Again this would indicate that it will be less costly to hire three (3) additional employees to complete the work and especially for those water districts that have many hydrants who might consider saving even more money by hiring the employees through their own district. R. McDaniel stated that the smaller districts that contract the work out may consider utilizing the county employees instead at a lower cost.

S. Cozart questioned when going beyond the annual maintenance plant and considering the repair issues would the purveyors have the employees report each incident or should they have the option of repairing it on site.

D. Griffin, Chumuckla Water System, stated that as long as that person is there and the repair is able to be completed it should occur right then as opposed to several trips being made to accomplish what could be done immediately. She believes that they should be equipped to accomplish this. In addition she wants to be made aware of the repair without delay. She believes that a county employee will be more accountable than a person who works for the contractor.

It was agreed that procedures will need to be established and implemented. J. Chalmers stated that in theory the water purveyors are technically "paying" the county employees and they would have to be accountable for their activities. He also stated that the purpose for having the county employees in place is not to make a profit, as the outside suppliers will do, but to make sure that the state mandated requirements are complete.

S. Cozart stated that we do recognize that the smaller systems are trying to keep their costs under control and that ultimately it will be of benefit to the citizens of the county.

W. Panchenko inferred that the water districts may already have parts and materials necessary to make some of the repairs.

R. McDaniel reiterated that we would most likely be employing residents of our county.

S. Cozart questioned whether the City of Milton would be more interested in including all of their hydrants with this plan. B. Watson, City of Milton, stated that the Fire Dept would continue to do the routine maintenance within the city limits, but that they might consider utilizing the repair maintenance along with those outside the city limits.

S. Cozart believes that it may be the same circumstances for Midway's district. He stated that this may generate a more universal participation throughout the entire county as it may eliminate the need for two separate private contractors.

S. Cozart stated that rather than obtaining bids on this project this committee will pursue making a recommendation to the BOCC that includes the concept of hiring county employees. Hopefully at our next meeting we can become more detailed regarding more specific numbers related to the costs of implementing this project and preparing the same for presentation to the BOCC.

Public Comments

None

Staff to invite all water purveyors to this particular meeting as the agenda will be dedicated to this subject.

S. Cozart noted that no replacements have been named to date for the open seats on this committee.

No further discussion and meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Next meeting will be held on August 16, 2006 at 2:00 p.m.